

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SOFIA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:SCUL, BU

SUBJECT: THRACIAN ART EXHIBIT

REF: A. STATE 24890; B. SOFIA 209; C. SOFIA 226

1. SMITHSONIAN INFORMS US THAT CONTENTS OF REF A ESSENTIALLY CORRECT. INDEED, ON JAN 27 SITES PROJECT OFFICER WROTE TO PROFESSOR FOL EXPRESSING DISMAY THAT SHE HAD RECEIVED NO ADDITIONAL VISUAL OR DESCRIPTIVE MATERIALS TO ASSIST HER IN PLACING THE EXHIBIT AT THE MAJOR MUSEUMS IN THE CITIES REQUESTED BY THE BULGARIANS. COPY OF LETTER DESCRIBING DESIRED MATERIALS IN DETAIL BEING POUCHED TO P AND C OFFICER COFMAN.

2. SO FAR, THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, AND FIELD MUSEUM IN CHICAGO HAVE ALL TURNED DOWN THE THRACIAN EXHIBIT FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS. IN FACT, TO DATE SITES HAS NO FIRM COMMITMENTS. SITES WILLING TO APPROACH THESE MUSEUMS AGAIN, BUT ONLY WHEN IT HAS SUPPORTING MATERIALS.

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3. REASON GIVEN BY METROPOLITAN WAS THAT CONTENTS OF EXHIBITION ARE SO SIMILAR TO SCYTHIAN TREASURES THAT IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE TO HAVE A SECOND EXHIBIT OF THIS TYPE SO SOON AFTERWARD.

4. FYI. SITES LETTER WAS SENT AT BEHEST OF BULGARIAN CULTURAL ATTACHE WHO WAS EQUALLY DISTRESSED THAT FOL HAD NOT RESPONDED TO SITES REQUEST FOR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS CONTAINED IN LETTER OF NOVEMBER 19 FOLLOWING VISIT OF MS. HALLETT TO SOFIA. END FYI. SITES HAS ALSO REQUESTED BBC-TV FILM FROM EMBASSY LONDON AND ADDITIONAL MATERIALS SOUGHT BY EMBASSY IN REF C SHOULD BE OF CONSIDERABLE ASSISTANCE.

5. WITH NO EXHIBITION COMMITMENTS ANYWHERE, WE BELIEVE IT, THEREFORE, TOO EARLY TO ENCOURAGE MRS. ZHIVKOVA TO ATTEND ANY PARTICULAR OPENING.

6. CONCERNING ICON EXHIBIT, SMITHSONIAN INITIAL RE-ACTION WAS NOT VERY ENCOURAGING. SITES PRESENTLY HAS AN EXHIBIT OF FINISHED ICONS WHIC ARE HERE FOR BICENTENNIAL, AND FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO PLACE SUC AN EXHIBIT.

IN ADDITION, HANDLING OF ICONS CAN BE VERY RISKY BECAUSE OF EFFECT CLIMATIC CHANGES CAN HAVE ON WOOD. NONETHELESS, BULGARIANS COULD CERTAINLY APPROACH SMITHSONIAN FOR FORMAL CONSIDERATION. AGAIN, FULL DESCRIPTIVE LITERATURE AND VISUAL MATERIALS WOULD BE NEEDED IN ORDER FOR SMITHSONIAN TO MAKE TENTATIVE INQUIRIES WITH EXHIBITORS.

7. GIVEN UNCERTAIN STATUS OF METROPOLITAN MUSEUM AS EXHIBITOR, WE BELIEVE SUGGESTED VISIT TO BULGARIA BY MONTEBELLO PREMATURE. IN ANY EVENT, BULGARIANS SHOULD TAKE LEAD BY EXTENDING HIM FORMAL INVITATION WHICH WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO SUPPORT AS LONG AS NO CU FUNDING INVOLVED. INGERSOLL

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